



S. 2607 – DTV Transition Assistance Act

FLOOR SITUATION

S. 2607 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) on February 7, 2008. The Senate passed the bill by unanimous consent on June 19, 2008. It was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, but was never considered.

S. 2607 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 9, 2008.

SUMMARY

Low-Power Television Stations Grant Program: S. 2607 allows grant money for low-power television and translator station digital upgrades to be made available beginning on February 18, 2009.

**Note: The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 provided funding of up to \$65 million to provide grants to reimburse these stations for the cost of digital upgrades beginning on October 1, 2010.*

Outreach: The bill provides the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) with the authority to take unused amounts from this grant account and use them for digital television transition consumer education and technical assistance for vulnerable populations.

BACKGROUND

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requires that on February 18, 2009, all over-the-air full power television broadcasts should discontinue analog operations and become fully digital. The digital televisions (DTV) transition will allow for parts of the broadcast spectrum to be made available for public safety communications and other parts will be auctioned to wireless companies to provide enhanced service to consumers.

When the DTV transition takes effect on February 19, 2009, televisions that receive free over-the-air television broadcasts, via a roof top antenna or a television antenna, will no longer be able to receive that programming without a digital-to-analog converter box. In order to assist individuals in obtaining a converter box, Congress created the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. This program allows every household in the United States to apply for up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to offset the cost of purchasing a converter box.

COST

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), "Based on information from NTIA, CBO estimates that enacting S. 2607 would not change the agency's anticipated spending patterns, and thus would have no effect on direct spending. Enacting the bill would not affect revenues or spending subject to appropriation."

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